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 STATE
 OF
 MONTANA

DIVISION OF FORENSIC SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

275 West Front Street, Missoula, MT 59802 (406) 728-4970

DECEMBER 1981

 SHELVED
 PERIODICALS

VEHICULAR FATALITIES

There are an increasing number of traffic fatalities in Montana. Most are alcohol related deaths. The Montana Highway Patrol and most law enforcement agencies require a post-mortem blood alcohol. This agency endorses this test throughout Montana to ensure an accurate report. Victims over the age of ten and all drivers should have a post-mortem blood alcohol determination.

WHERE ARE WE?

We continue to receive mail parcels and bus deliveries addressed to personnel, Crime Lab, and other departments. To ensure prompt delivery, please send to the DIVISION OF FORENSIC SCIENCE, 275 WEST FRONT STREET, MISSOULA, MONTANA 59802. Some mail is still being sent to the old Wilma Building address, which was vacated over two years ago.

SEMINARS

The regional seminars last month were gigantic successes. Very large turnouts were seen in Dillon, Butte and Sidney. There were some very useful exchanges of information. Nearly half of the counties in Montana were represented. Agencies represented were sheriffs, police, highway patrol, attorneys, doctors, coroners, firemen, emergency personnel, search and rescue, forest service, nurses, hospital administrators, commissioners and mayors.

The next seminar will be in Missoula on December 17th and 18th. Again it is sponsored by the Montana Coroner's Association and the Department of Justice.

BLOOD STAINS

Blood on the skin or on large objects which cannot be sent to the Crime Lab can be removed in the following manner:

Use a small cotton gauze pad, or even threads for minute samples, soaked in normal saline or distilled water. Swab the stain so as to obtain the darkest red concentration possible. Also take a "blank" sample from an adjacent unstained area. Do not use alcohol or treated gauze patches. Try to avoid using the paper gauze frequently found in first aid kits.

STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

JUN 9 - 1983

 MONTANA STATE LIBRARY
 1515 E. 6th AVE.
 HELENA, MONTANA 59620

NOVEMBER 1981

ON CALL SCHEDULE - MONTANA STATE MEDICAL EXAMINER

275 W. Front Street
Missoula, Montana 59802

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5 JOHN PFAFF
6 JOHN PFAFF	7	8	9	10	11	12 KEN MUELLER
13 KEN MUELLER	14	15	16	17	18	19 RON RIVERS
20 RON RIVERS	21	22	23	24	25	26 RON RIVERS
27 RON RIVERS	28	28	30	31		

Telephone Numbers: State Office - 728-4970
WATS Line - 243-5796

Home Phone: Dr. Ron Rivers- 728-2033 (Home)
(week nights call unless otherwise indicated)

Dr. John Pfaff - Great Falls
Hospital - 727-3333
Home - 727-3905

Dr. Ken Mueller- Billings
Hospital - 657-7000
Home - 248-3024

November 1981
ELECTROCUTION
R. L. Rivers, M. D.

The investigator was crouched over the body of a 52 year old man lying near the automatic arc-welding machine. "Poor Leo, he finally had his last heart attack. See; here are his digitalis pills in his pocket. Well, he would have wanted it this way on the job."

QUESTIONS:

- 1) What could be the result of a wrong assumption of an "on the job" death?
- 2) If electrocution is suspected, what steps should be taken?
- 3) How often are "burn marks" found on electrical deaths?

ANSWERS:

1. The death investigator, like the medical examiner, has a similar duty ... to help the living. Not only to insure that justice is rendered to the survivors, but also to prevent unnecessary death in others; to make sure that no other people are poisoned by carbon monoxide, beaten to death by their parents, or electrocuted by faulty equipment. Failure to accurately determine the cause of death in an electrical accident could result in death or severe injury to a job replacement. It is not inconceivable that a suit could arise by an injured party toward a negligent investigation. If the death is ruled accidental rather than natural, the wife and children may be entitled to a double death benefit from insurance. No one would want to deprive a family who has tragically lost the breadwinner of a sizeable sum.

2. Order an autopsy to rule out death by other means and to document electrical injuries, if present.

Also order an "equipment or appliance" autopsy, preferably by a certified electrician. Obtain a written report and photographs of the defective wiring, if possible.

3. Low voltage current causes most accidents and death from electrical shock. Only one third of all electrical accidents from 220 volts or less will show "burn marks". Many marks are only pin head in size and barely detectable by the experienced pathologist. Often the burns may be confined solely to the clothing, so it is essential that the shoes, glasses and head gear be carefully examined.